

Billy Wibstar - Entrepreneur.

That's what it said on my card.

I'd got the idea after counting up the number of computer games in the local software shop. Then I worked out how much they were worth - and I started dreaming pound coins. I borrowed some start-up money from Dad. At first he thought it was a wind-up. Then he saw I meant business. He handed over the cheque with a sad smile on his face - as though that was the last he thought he'd see of the money.

Day One - arrived at the wholesaler in my brand new van - total bedlam. I even had to get my own stuff off the racks with a forklift and send it up to despatch, where I could load it into the van. Those guys in despatch are crazy! The stuff came down the delivery chute so fast I couldn't keep up. When I drove out there was a litter of computer parts and cassette cases all over the floor. I hadn't left the warehouse - and I was already losing money!

The drive to my first drop was a nightmare. One of my competitors beat me out of the wholesaler's gates and I couldn't get past him. What made it worse - the idiot had left his back doors open! I had to dodge a steady shower of debris as it came tumbling out. Didn't do my van much good. I finally got to the shop, unloaded the van and pressed the button for the lift. That's when my problems really began.

No - I don't want to talk about it! Try it yourself - you'll see why!

Objective and setting.

Wibstars is about the successful operation of a computer goods distribution company. The player must collect products from a central warehouse and then deliver them to his customers. The trick is to stay in business AND make a profit!

Gameplay

Wibstars is a one-player game for keyboard or joystick. If you opt for keyboard, you may define your own keys or accept the default key definitions. These are:

Up - Q
Left - O

Fire - Enter

Down - A
Right - P

The first stage of Wibstars requires you to collect the goods to deliver to your customers. The goods in question are cassettes (costing £5), discs (costing £10) and computers (costing £100). You start in business with £200, and the program will not allow you to spend more than this.

To collect your goods, move the fork lift truck (FLT) into contact with one of the stacks of goods. As long as you continue the joystick or keyboard command for leftward movement, the FLT will automatically pick up goods. As soon as you release the FLT, it will take its load to the waiting skip. When you have enough goods, take the FLT to the exit. If you run out of money, the FLT will automatically go to the exit and initiate the next phase in the program.

In the despatch bay, your goods will drop from overhead chutes and you must catch the goods in your van as they fall. When all of your goods have been released from the chutes, the Wibstars program will automatically take your vehicle to the next screen.

The next screen gives you a scrolling bird's eye view of the road and a map of the area. You have to drive to a shop and deliver your goods. There is a competitor's van right in front of you. You will be showered with computer goods and junk from the rear of his vehicle. Avoiding the junk, which will damage your van and cost you money, you can catch the cassettes, discs or computers by driving over them. You can then sell them when you reach the shop. Different shops pay different prices for goods, and you can discover the good payers by exploration.

In the unloading area of the shop, your task is to move the goods via a series of lifts and conveyors from your van to the office. Your driver must be immediately adjacent to the back of the van, facing towards it. Press Fire. You will then be able to choose the type and value of package to be unloaded. When the package is out of the van, the man must kick it towards the lift. In front of the lift is a conveyor, and in front of that is a lift-call pad. The man must tread on the pad and change its colour to call the lift. You must then get the package onto the conveyor, so that it goes into the lift. If it goes under the lift, go back to the van and get another package. At some point in the game you may wish to use the lift-call button at the bottom of the lift-shaft. You can put a package in the lift, or travel in it yourself, but the lift will not accept you and a package. You will only get paid for what you deliver to the office. To get through this part of the game you need to keep your wits about you.

When your van is empty, take the man to the rear of the vehicle and press fire as though you were trying to get another package. The driver will then get back into the van and drive away. If you are still in profit you will go immediately back to the scrolling street screen. You can then return to the warehouse. The game ends if you have made a loss.